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E/CN.6/1992/NGO/2
12 February 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Thirty-sixth session
Vienna, 11-20 March 1992
Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda*

PRIORITY THEMES

PEACE: EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN ALL EFFORTS TO PROMOTE
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, PEACE AND DISARMAMENT

Statement submitted by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: Zonta International (category I); and International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation of University Women, Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (category II)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

* * *

1. The Commission on the Status of Women, at its thirty-fourth session, adopted draft resolution XIII, to which were annexed the recommendations and conclusions arising from the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The Commission's draft resolution was adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1990/15. Paragraph 22 of the recommendations is indeed accurate: "Despite the progress made in some areas, international, regional and national conflicts persist, and women continue to number among their main victims. At the same time, women are no more prominent among those making decisions on conflict than in the past." During the months preceding the Gulf War, women were conspicuously absent from the negotiating process.

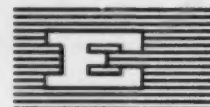
2. That armed conflict is over and peace initiatives are underway. Recommendation XX states that "Governments should be encouraged to increase the participation of women in the peace process at the decision-making level, including them as part of delegations to negotiate international agreements relating to peace and disarmament and establishing a target for the number of women participating in such delegations". We strongly support the inclusion of women as part of delegations to negotiate international agreements relating to peace. Women, over 50 per cent of the world's

*E/CN.6/1992/1.

population, should participate in decisions that will affect their lives and those of their children.

3. Two years have passed since the adoption of the draft resolution and we see little evidence that Member States have implemented recommendation XX or have any intention of doing so. No new recommendation is needed, but we urge the Commission to call on Member States to act now to implement recommendation XX. It is time for the Commission to focus world attention on one of its most important recommendations by calling on Member States to honour their commitment to equality for women in the process of negotiating peace by implementation of this recommendation.

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AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Thirty-sixth session
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Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda*

PRIORITY THEMES

DEVELOPMENT: INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT;
WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Statement submitted by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: Soroptimist International (category I); Associated Country Women of the World, International Federation for Home Economics, World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (category II); and European Union of Women and International Inner Wheel (roster)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

* * *

The above-named non-governmental organizations,

Wholeheartedly welcome the efforts of the Commission on the Status of Women to give attention under the priority theme of development (ii) women and the environment,

Concerned: in particular,

With women's role in environmental management,

With women's experiences in protecting the environment as well as human and natural resources,

With the decision-making with regard to environmental policies, projects and funding,

With the urgent need for educational programmes in the field of environment specifically for women,

With women's influence as consumers,

*E/CN.6/1992/1.

Note with much appreciation the findings of the Global Assembly of Women and the Environment: "Partners for Life" held at Miami, Florida, in 1991,

Endorse the following recommendations:

Successful projects at the grass-roots level should lead to more concerted policies and action at the national level. Mechanisms should be established to incorporate the experience, talents and contribution by women into national policies and programmes;

Women should be party to the allocation of funds and resources from national authorities or international lending agencies;

The needs and views of women must be incorporated in the establishment of priorities in the management of human and natural resources. Women should also be involved in setting priorities in this action;

National and international funding sources for environmental projects should establish procedures for including and consulting women prior to project design or making and investment;

Appropriate research to identify the type of potential impact on people's lives of environmental and development projects should be made available to both public and private institutions, including academia;

Invite Governments:

To develop systems whereby women are proportionally represented in decision-making positions with regard to environmental policies, programme planning, funding etc.;

To develop programmes on environmental education at all levels with specific emphasis for girls and women;

To establish institutions for environment counselling at all levels using women's special experiences.

The above-named non-governmental organizations, being fully aware of their role and responsibility to cooperate, would like to draw the attention of the delegates of the Commission to the fact that environmental questions are not confined by national borders. They urge the Commission not only to promote multi-lateral cooperation but also to make use of women's readiness to cooperate.

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AND
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Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda*

PRIORITY THEMES

DEVELOPMENT: INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT;
WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Statement submitted by Soroptimist International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (category I)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

* * *

Agreeing wholeheartedly with the interpretation given at the Seminar on the Integration of Women in Development, held at Vienna in 1991, that development to be total must include political, economic, social, cultural and other dimensions of human life,

Taking into account, as noted at the Inter-Agency Consultation on Preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (1995), which Consultation was held at Vienna in 1991, that the Commission on the Status of Women, by its resolution 35/4, decided that the programme of action should comprise only a limited number of issues,

Concerned that any further planning has to take place within the next three years,

Aware of the necessity for diversification from the present pattern, to create new employment opportunities for women,

Noting the need to act on the experiences and knowledge in local communities,

*E/CN.6/1992/1.

The above-mentioned non-governmental organizations request Governments and development agencies:

To ensure that women are active partners in the process of furthering such development efficiently;

To involve local women, at all levels of society, who are familiar with the needs of their communities to ensure that due consideration is given to their opinions;

To create new employment and training opportunities for women, including the elderly and disabled, in industrial and high technology fields as well as traditional and other non-traditional fields with, wherever possible set gender percentage participation;

To review present training and employment practice with a view to furthering the advancement of women;

Further being aware of the important regional activities proposed they will:

Cooperate as fully as possible in the commissions and with national machineries;

Assist with public awareness programmes and encourage networking;

Continue to review and monitor progress on the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies.

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Thirty-sixth session
Vienna, 11-20 March 1992
Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN:
ACTION FOR EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Statement submitted by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: International Council of Women (category I); and Associated Country Women of the World, International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation of University Women, International Movement for Fraternal Union among Races and Peoples and World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (category II)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

* * *

Fourth World Conference on Women (1995)

1. We welcome the decision to hold the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. Given that the time allotted for the Conference is very short, it is essential that the preparations for the Conference should be comprehensive and deal with substantive items that are the concern of all women.
2. We urge that in these preparations the arrangements for the NGO Forum should be such that exchanges and contacts between the Forum and the Conference may easily take place. Individual members of networks, autonomous groups, as well as government representatives and representatives of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council must be fully involved in the preparatory process as well as having access to, and participating in, the Forum. Access to the Conference should be as wide as possible.

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UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Thirty-sixth session
Vienna, 11-20 March 1992
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING
STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Statement submitted by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: International Council of Women (category I); and Associated Country Women of the World, International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation of University Women, International Movement for Fraternal Union among Races and Peoples and World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (category II)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

* * *

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Deeply concerned about the many reservations to certain articles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women referring to equality and discrimination; employment; legal equality; freedom of movement and domicile; and status in marriage; which matters stand at the heart of the problem of discrimination,

1. We request the Member States that have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to give serious consideration to the removal of existing reservations. We further request Member States that have ratified the Convention to do so without reservations;
2. Having taken note of the recommendation of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that a meeting be held with the representatives of other human rights treaty bodies and with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women with a view to discussing appropriate approaches to the supervision of overlapping treaty obligations; we urge the Committee and the Division for the Advancement of Women to cooperate fully with this recommendation.

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UNITED NATIONS
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AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



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PRIORITY THEMES

DEVELOPMENT: INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT;
WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Statement submitted by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: International Organization of Consumers Union, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Soroptimist International, Women's International Democratic Federation, Zonta International (category I); Caritas Internationalis (International Confederation of Catholic Charities), Disabled Peoples' International, International Federation of University Women, International Abolitionist Federation, International Council of Jewish Women, Italian Centre of Solidarity, Pax Romana (International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs) (International Movement of Catholic Students), Women's International Zionist Organization, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, World Young Women's Christian Association (category II); and International Inner Wheel, International Association of Charities and World Peace Council (roster)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

The above-mentioned non-governmental organizations, interested in and engaged for a present and future healthy environment for all people, are concerned about the fact that only a few women worldwide constitute an extremely small percentage of those who participate in environmental decision-making, and we therefore urge Governments to ensure that the Earth Charter includes both women and men in its rights and obligations and that the perceptions and priorities of women be fully reflected therein.

Therefore the above-mentioned non-governmental organizations:

Bearing in mind the summary report of the Global Assembly of Women and the Environment: "Partners in Life", held from 4 to 8 November 1991, at Miami, Florida, United States of America,

*E/CN.6/1992/1.

Appreciating the recommendations of that Global Assembly for a sustainable future,

Fully aware of the complexity of the problem,

Recognizing the close interconnection of global economic, social, political and environmental conceptions and activities,

Mindful of the fact that already one third of the earth surface is infertile because of the spreading of large urban areas and deserts and that thousands of plants and animals have disappeared,

Paying attention to the additional heavy strain on a high-risk environment caused by fast population growth, mainly affecting the health and well-being of women and their children,

Noting that in many parts of the world there is a significant increase in the incidence of physical and mental disabilities due to a devastated environment,

Taking into account that women are increasingly more concerned about the environment as they are the main care givers, food producers, managers of natural resources and consumers at home, observing increasingly the often immediate effect of an unhealthy environment harming them, their children and family members,

Urge Governments to quickly respond to the pressing problem of the deteriorating environment which crosses all existing national borders and to achieve a basic goal which assures a healthy environment by:

Hearing the voices of women and recognizing environmental women's groups and non-governmental organizations working successfully at the grass-roots level;

Making use of women's experiences and talents at all decision-making levels concerning the environment;

Promoting responsible equal participation in the process of democratization;

Stopping arbitrary exploitation of non-renewable resources, the dumping of toxic waste and the further destruction of the environment by excessive consumption habits;

Sharing safe technology, know-how and information to guarantee safe water, air and healthy living conditions;

Appealing to the World Bank and other national and international financial bodies to facilitate debt relief for the poor countries and to ensure humane living conditions;

Stressing prevention programmes and environmental education;

Creating independent institutions of experts to consider the possible future consequences of today's ecological situation;

Giving incentives to reward positive attitudes and actions to create a healthy and sustainable environment;

Penalizing negative attitudes and actions causing damage to the environment;

Compensating people who have been disabled by an unhealthy environment
e.g. Chernobyl, Bhopal, Love Canal and others;

Preventing armed conflicts;

Favouring a policy of common sense before a policy of power;

Promoting peace and justice and a responsible positive attitude towards life and nature to create an environment for the survival of humankind.

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Thirty-sixth session
Vienna, 11-20 March 1992
Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN:
ACTION FOR EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Statement submitted by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: International Organization of Consumers Union, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Women's International Democratic Federation, Soroptimist International, Zonta International (category I); Disabled Peoples' International, International Abolitionist Federation, International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of University Women, Italian Centre of Solidarity, Pax Romana (International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs) (International Movement of Catholic Students), Socialist International Women, Women's International Zionist Organization, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, World Young Women's Christian Association (category II); and European Union of Women, International Inner Wheel, International Association of Charities and World Peace Council (roster)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

* * *

Recalling decision 35/102 of the Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/12 on the world conference on women in 1995,

Noting that the report of the Secretary-General on preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (E/CN.6/1992/3) mentions important regional preparatory activities,

Appreciating the intention to host an NGO Forum expressed by the Governments of Austria and China in their invitation to hold a world conference on women in 1995.

*E/CN.6/1992/1.

The above-mentioned non-governmental organizations,

Draw the attention of the members of the Commission on the Status of Women to the fact that the participation of non-governmental organizations in the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (1995) is as essential as in the previous world conferences on women held at Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980 and Nairobi in 1985. Participation is also essential to non-governmental organizations in their role of publicizing the results of the Conference as well as contributing to the implementation of its decisions. The holding of three successful parallel NGO forums proved to be essential for establishing a future agenda for non-governmental organizations and also for government action.

Strongly recommend,

At the national and regional levels: Governments should make special efforts to involve grass-roots women's organizations, national and regional non-governmental organizations, as well as individuals concerned with the advancement of women, in the planning of preparatory activities for the Fourth World Conference on Women and in establishing national and regional programmes of action;

National and regional non-governmental organizations should be encouraged and their full participation facilitated to help to develop a platform for action to be adopted by the Conference;

At the regional level: regional economic commissions include provision for regional non-governmental organization forums in the planning of preparatory conferences;

That mechanisms should be established by regional non-governmental organization focal points and by women's units of the regional commissions to include non-governmental organizations in the planning of such events and make provisions for input to the regional programmes of action by these organizations;

At the international level: the Commission on the Status of Women should request the Secretary-General to continue to provide facilities so that non-governmental organizations can continue holding preparatory meetings for the Conference at the time of the sessions of the Commission in 1993, 1994 and 1995;

Arrangements should be made to permit input from the NGO planning committee to the formulation of the final document of the Conference;

The host Government for the Conference should commit support for an NGO Forum immediately prior to the Conference, possibly with some overlap;

The Forum must be open and accessible to all interested non-governmental organizations. A procedure should be established to create a mechanism to communicate the results of the NGO Forum to the Conference.

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING
STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Statement submitted by the International Alliance of Women, a non-
governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and
Social Council (category I)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is
circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social
Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

* * *

1. Reacting to the growing need articulated by its constituent members,
the International Alliance of Women (IAW), since 1979, has constantly
worked towards placing the issue of violence against women on the
international agenda.
2. From the beginning of its activities in this particular field, the IAW
has repeatedly stressed that violence against women represents a violation
of their rights as human beings and that no improvement of the situation of
women would be possible without addressing this problem at national and
international levels.

3. The aims of these endeavours have been:

To raise awareness for the universal nature of the problem and, in
particular, its hidden character;

To encourage women victims of violence all over the world to speak out
and to disperse the shadows in which the issue has been concealed up to now.

4. Furthermore, in all the above-mentioned efforts, the IAW has consis-
tently advocated close cooperation on the issue of violence against women
between such United Nations bodies as the Commission on the Status of Women,
the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the

*E/CN.6/1992/1.

Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, in order to effectively combat this global problem.

5. In consequence, the IAW welcomed resolution 1991/18 of the Economic and Social Council entitled "Violence against women in all its forms" calling, inter alia, on the above-mentioned United Nations bodies to prepare the framework of an international instrument that would explicitly address the issue of violence against women as well as General Recommendation No. 12 (eighth session, 1989) of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women calling State Parties to report on measures taken to eradicate violence against women.

6. The IAW firmly believes that only a concerted inter-agency, inter-disciplinary action, including all sectors of society will prove effective and conducive to eliminating violence against women.

7. In the light of the above, the IAW strongly and actively supports every effort:

To improve and strengthen the communications procedure of the Commission on the Status of Women, for a great many women the only channels to get their voices and complaints heard;

To prepare an international instrument addressing specifically the issue of violence perpetrated against women. In order to be effective, such an instrument should not only establish direct and unbureaucratic links between the grass-roots and national as well as international bodies, but also should relate to those countries that have not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women or have ratified with extensive reservations. In order to meet both targets, the IAW, while welcoming a United Nations declaration on violence against women as a first step, strongly recommends the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on violence against women with those terms of reference contained in the report of the Expert Group Meeting on Violence against Women (EGM/VAW/1991/1), held at Vienna, from 11 to 15 November 1991.

8. According to the experience of IAW affiliated societies, women cannot be convinced to speak out and denounce violence against them - particularly within the family - without the possibility to hide in a refuge until the moment they are able to find a paid job and a place to stay. However, for financial reasons, refuges for battered women and their children are lacking all over the world. The IAW therefore recommends the creation of a special United Nations fund to finance the creation of refuges for women victims of violence and their children in Member States.

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AND
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Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda*

PRIORITY THEMES

DEVELOPMENT: INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT;
WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Statement submitted by the Bahá'í International Community, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (category II)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

* * *

1. The Bahá'í International Community is pleased to take this opportunity to address the role of women in development, particularly the crucial role women will play, in partnership with men, in creating and implementing a sustainable pattern of development.
2. The concept of sustainable development has emerged largely in response to a growing disillusionment with the prevalent development models and an increasing collaboration between three great forward-looking movements: peace, the environment and women's emancipation. A crucial element common to all three movements is the significant role played by women. For decades, development planners neglected the needs of women, paid scant attention to the deterioration of the environment and failed to discern the connection between development and peace. As a result, development failed. The convergence of these movements has amplified women's voices and strengthened their call for a sustainable future for their children and their children's children. As women help to redefine development, planners are beginning to take a more holistic approach.
3. One way in which women are redefining development is by undertaking their own projects. The 1991 Global Assembly of Women and the Environment: "Partners in Life", sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), highlighted an incredible diversity of such projects. UNEP invited representatives of both Governments and non-governmental organizations to

*E/CN.6/1992/1.

Miami, Florida, to confer with 215 women who had initiated successful environment projects in communities all over the world. These women, many of them faced daily with the responsibility for protecting the health of their families and feeding them, took action within the spheres of influence traditionally open to women. They designed smokeless stoves, solar cookers and solar greenhouses, cleaned up local water supplies, altered farming methods and successfully cultivated degraded lands given up for lost. Others influenced policy- and decision-making in realms not usually considered the province of women. They reformed local and national sewer systems, recycled highly toxic used motor oil, and obliged powerful industrial concerns to reduce scandalously high levels of lead and cadmium emissions. The projects - some carried out at the grass roots by ordinary citizens, others initiated at the highest levels - offer affordable, repeatable and sustainable solutions to problems common throughout the world.

4. Women are also redefining development through their work with non-governmental organizations. Immediately after the UNEP-sponsored Global Assembly, non-governmental organizations sponsored the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet, also at Miami. Over 1,500 women and men from more than 75 countries, both individuals and representatives of a broad range of non-governmental organizations, heard testimony and engaged in a spirited exchange of views on a variety of environment-related topics. The Declaration made at the close of the Congress offered to the 1992 Earth Summit in Brazil three guiding principles for inclusion in its proposed "Earth Charter": (a) global equity, giving priority to meeting the basic human needs of all people; (b) resource ethics, calling for sustainable use of natural resources and responsibility towards future generations; and (c) empowerment of women at all levels to contribute to the achievement of the principles of equity, social justice and ethics.

5. The world is in desperate need of the ingenuity, good sense, determination and compassion exhibited by the women selected by UNEP. As evidence of the failure of current development strategies mounts, it is becoming increasingly obvious that women's talents and capacities are being underutilized. Imagine the benefits that could accrue to families, communities and the world if women were educated and fully involved in decision-making and policy-making at every level of society.

6. Full participation by both women and men is a goal of Bahá'í development. The New Era Development Institute, Bahá'í institution in Panchgani, India, conducts an extensive regional development programme. While the Institute conducts some programmes aimed mainly at women, it would be misleading to assume that other activities do not incorporate women-related issues in their planning or implementation. The concept of the empowerment and development of women is intrinsic in the goals and all operational objectives of the Institute. The Institute's approach to its activities is integrated, not vertical or compartmentalized, thus ensuring that the development and training needs of women are systematically fused into all training and field application processes, including health education, afforestation, adult literacy, rural technology, animal husbandry and rural schools.

7. This inclusive, integrated approach to development derives from the conviction that no development effort will succeed without unity. In the words of Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, over 100 years ago: "The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless

and until its unity is firmly established". Guided by this principle, Bahá'í communities have evolved an approach to development which is unifying, participatory, sustainable and replicable. Beginning with a shared vision for the future, Bahá'ís seek practical ways to implement the principles that will bring about willing cooperation between women and men and among the nations, races, creeds and classes of the human family.

8. One way Bahá'ís include women is through consultation. Whatever the specific differences between successful Bahá'í projects, all rely on consultation at every stage to ensure full participation at the grass-roots level and relevance to local needs. Furthermore, they look to elected local and national Bahá'í councils - consultative decision-making bodies on which both women and men serve - to guide and sustain development activities.

9. One Bahá'í project, aimed at changing the community's perception of women, is using traditional media, such as music, dance and theatre, to stimulate village-wide discussion of women's roles. Launched in three countries - Bolivia, Cameroon and Malaysia - by the Bahá'í International Community with assistance from the United Nations Development Fund for Women, this project is unique in its attempt to draw men into consultation about issues affecting women's status. Folk media were chosen because of their capacity to engage both men and women, literate and non-literate, in consultation. The hope is that out of these community consultations will come a commitment on the part of both men and women to redefine village and community priorities.

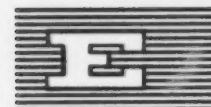
10. To ensure that these discussions promote unity, the community is taught the consultative process: to define the problem, to gather the facts, to identify relevant principles, to speak frankly and to listen to one another respectfully. This process allows the community to explore important questions together, with open minds and hearts, and encourages communication on how to apply in their own lives such principles as the equality between men and women. Through consultation, men are allowed to realize for themselves that inequality truly exists. For example, in one village the men and the women were each asked to complete a list of their daily tasks and then to exchange lists. The men were shocked and embarrassed at the uneven division of labour. They saw, for the first time, how holding uncritically to traditional roles, roles that limit the actions of both men and women, causes the entire community to suffer. By discussing realities such as these in a rational, non-threatening manner, men are also able to see how creating a more just balance between women and men enhances, rather than diminishes, men's role in society. Having identified arenas for change, the community can make plans to implement those changes with support from the local governing council.

11. The reliance on consultation to bring everyone into the change process, makes the Bahá'í approach to development replicable anywhere. Already two more national Bahá'í communities, Nigeria and Brazil, have asked to participate in the traditional media project at their own expense. This willingness to engage in the admittedly difficult process of personal and social transformation is typical of Bahá'í communities. It is rooted in the commitment to unity and the understanding that, in order to progress, women must be included as full and equal partners in all fields of human endeavour.

12. Partnership calls for changes by both women and men. Women need to develop their own capacities and step forward to play an active role in solving the world's problems. Men, for their part, must learn to cooperate

with women and encourage their efforts. When men actively promote the principle of equality, women will no longer have to struggle for their rights. Gradually, Bahá'is believe, both women and men will discard long-held unhealthy attitudes and progressively incorporate into their lives the values conducive to true unity, without which an environmentally sustainable civilization will be impossible.

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Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda*

PRIORITY THEMES

PEACE: EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN ALL EFFORTS TO PROMOTE
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, PEACE AND DISARMAMENT

Statement submitted by the European Union of Women, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (roster)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

* * *

Interregional consultation on women in public life

The General Assembly by its resolution 44/77 of 8 December 1989 endorsed the convening of a high-level interregional consultation on women in public life. The Economic and Social Council recommended that the consultation should have maximum participation by Governments and non-governmental organizations.

One of the aims of the European Union of Women is the encouragement of all women to participate actively in the political process and this organization deeply deplores the postponement of this interregional consultation.

The European Union of Women hopes that resolution 45/127 of 14 December 1990, which invites "Governments and national institutions and organizations to provide extra-budgetary resources to facilitate preparations for the consultation, especially for the participation of least developed countries and for the dissemination of information about the consultation", will be taken up and for that reason stresses the importance of organizing this consultation, at least in the context of preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (1995).

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Item 5 (a) and (b) of the provisional agenda*

PRIORITY THEMES

EQUALITY: ELIMINATION OF DE JURE AND DE FACTO
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

DEVELOPMENT: INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN THE PROCESS OF
DEVELOPMENT

Statement submitted by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: International Alliance of Women, International Council on Social Welfare, Soroptimist International, Zonta International (category I); All-India Women's Conference, Associated Country Women of the World, Bahá'í International Community, International Commission of Jurists, International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation of University Women, International Federation of Women Lawyers, Socialist International Women, World Federation of Methodist Women, World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (category II)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

1. The above-mentioned non-governmental organizations wish to emphasize the cross sectoral nature of two of the priority themes: equality: elimination of de jure and de facto discrimination against women; and development: the integration of women in the process of development.

2. In paragraph 44 of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies it is stated that, "the inequality of women in most countries stems to a very large extent from mass poverty and the general backwardness of the majority of the world's population caused by underdevelopment. ... The unfavourable status of women is aggravated in many countries, developed and underdeveloped, by de facto discrimination on the grounds of sex". International statistics (The World's Women 1970 - 90/ST/ESA/STAT SER.K/89) indicate that on any measure of health, education and employment, women count as the majority of the world's poor.

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There is, in consequence, a direct relationship between achieving equal rights for women, i.e. the elimination of *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination and the successful integration of women in development.

3. The General Assembly of the United Nations has demonstrated its commitment to advance the status of women as a result of accepting the Forward-looking Strategies by consensus and through subsequent measures to support this decision. Since 1985, many Governments have taken the relevant steps to ensure both men and women enjoy equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities so that legislation exists in an increasing number of countries outlawing *de jure* discrimination. As noted by members of the Commission itself, it is much more difficult to observe similar changes in regard to *de facto* discrimination, the area in which the Commission on the Status of Women plays a central role.

4. This lack of progress is highlighted by General Assembly resolution 46/653, which calls again upon Member States to give priority to policies and programmes relating to the subthemes employment, health and education, in particular, literacy to empower women and ensure their equal participation in society.

5. To achieve real change however, greater attention must be given to the use of tradition and customary law. These elements in society, most frequently lie at the heart of gender-based stereotyping and hence the continued existence of *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination towards women. Such gender-based stereotyping, for example, underpins the tradition that women should be entirely responsible for unpaid household production. Also social education in gender roles leaves the onus of domestic well-being to women and accounts for the continued existence of a segregated labour market. Gender-based stereotyping is equally responsible for negative attitudes to women at all stages of the life cycle and, in particular, towards ageing and elderly women.

6. In this connection we wish to commend:

(a) The work already undertaken by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities with regard to traditional practices affecting the health of women and children;

(b) The written statement by non-governmental organizations presented to the Chair of the First Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights (1993) with regard to the need for an in-depth study on the effect tradition plays in the application of international standards concerning human rights;

(c) The resolution of the General Assembly of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO), 31 October 1991, which calls on the Secretary-General to charge the Centre for Human Rights with producing a study for the World Conference on Human Rights on customary law and tradition as it affects the enjoyment of human rights.

7. It is clear however, that the effect of tradition, customary law and stereotyping have special implications with regard to women and the measures necessary for their effective integration in development.

8. In order to advance the intentions expressed in paragraph 65 of the Forward-looking Strategies regarding the need for in-depth research, we request the Commission to investigate the causes of the deeply rooted

resistance towards advancing the status of women, which stems from tradition, customary law and stereotyping, for example, by holding a seminar or undertaking an in-depth study on the issue. Case-studies of successful programmes, where communities have come to modify local tradition in order to eliminate discrimination towards women should be examined and publicized.

9. The findings of the investigation should be made available to the Commission at its thirty-seventh session in 1993. We further recommend that they form part of the documentation submitted to the World Conference on Human Rights by the Commission.

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PRIORITY THEMES

DEVELOPMENT: INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT

Statement submitted by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: International Alliance of Women - Equal Rights, Equal Responsibilities, International Federation of Business and Professional Women and Soroptimist International (category I); American Association of Retired Persons, Bahá'í International Community, International Association for Religious Freedom, International Association of Women in Radio and Television, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of University Women, Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, World Federation of Methodist Women and World Movement of Mothers (category II); and International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (roster)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

* * *

It is especially important that the large numbers of refugees and displaced women should be considered when policies are defined and steps taken to achieve the integration of women in the process of development. With women constituting close to 80 per cent of the refugee population, the promotion of development must be a key element at all stages of assisting, protecting and repatriating refugee women.

The first years of the 1990s have seen dramatic shifts in the movement of peoples. Events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, the freeing of the nations of Eastern Europe, the demise of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War have resulted in large flows of refugees as well as economic migrants across the face of the earth.

*E/CN.6/1992/1.

In its "Information Note on UNHCR's Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women" prepared for the forty-second session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (EXCOM), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) pointed out:

"International protection, however, goes beyond adherence to legal principles. Equally important, the protection of refugee women requires planning and common sense in establishing programmes and enforcing priorities that support their safety and well-being. Thus, international protection and refugee women must be understood in its widest sense. Refugee women who are unable to feed, clothe and shelter themselves and their children, for example, will be more vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse in order to obtain such necessities.

"The intrinsic relationship which exists between protection and assistance is particularly evident in relation to refugee women. The guidelines underline that protection concerns can often be best addressed through assistance-related measures. Conversely, the planning and implementation of assistance programmes can have direct, and sometimes, adverse consequences for the protection of refugee women if their specific needs are ignored."

One of the most important functions of UNHCR is to plan for and oversee the repatriation of refugees, most of whom are women and children. As political solutions are found in some of the most troubled areas of the earth i.e. Angola, Cambodia, Namibia and the Central American countries, millions of those who fled will return to their homelands. It is hoped that in the coming years more such solutions will be arrived at so that other large populations, such as the Afghans, will be able to leave refugee camps and return to their homes.

Proper planning for their return must be made by UNHCR together with other United Nations agencies and private organizations. From the very beginning, the repatriation process should include appropriate development strategies to be built into the programmes. Development programmes must be formulated taking into account the particular needs, interests, desires and resources of the refugee women themselves. These remarkable women who have survived and taken care of themselves and their families despite overwhelming obstacles should be consulted at all stages of the planning process.

Repatriation efforts undertaken by UNHCR should involve United Nations development agencies and private organizations whenever possible. An example of a successful and fruitful cooperative effort is the CIREFCA PROCESS in Central America, which was undertaken by UNHCR and a unit of the United Nations Development Programme. CIREFCA demonstrated the benefits to both the refugees and host population of bringing a development agency into the repatriation process.

The Special Advisor to the High Commissioner pointed out:

"It is no longer possible to look upon voluntary repatriation projects as commando operations that require a militaristic approach and do not take into account the rehabilitation or reintegration of the refugees. Yet the dignity of a refugee depends on the conditions and opportunities offered. A return to poverty is a humiliation hard to bear after so many years of suffering.

"Thus, voluntary repatriation must be conceived as a durable solution which takes into consideration both the overall planning of the practical and political modalities of return, and the reintegration of the refugees into the national economy and culture. The refugees become citizen-agents of development. UNHCR cannot do without development experts if it intends to master the voluntary repatriation process." ^{1/}

We call upon the Commission on the Status of Women as it considers the priority theme of development to use all the means at its disposal, both at the United Nations and with individual Governments, to persuade them to include development strategies in the repatriation process of millions of refugee women.

^{1/} Marie Angélique Savane, in REFUGEES, October 1991.

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PRIORITY THEMES

EQUALITY: ELIMINATION OF DE JURE AND DE FACTO
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Statement submitted by the World Veterans Federation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (category I)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

* * *

The World Veterans Federation (WVF) was founded in 1950 by a group of war veterans and war victims to help build a peaceful, just and free world founded on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The WVF is an active non-governmental organization presenting statements and testimonies on numerous issues including those related to peace, disarmament and human rights. It has also presented statements to the Commission on the Status of Women.

One important objective of the WVF is to defend the interests of war veterans and war victims by all legal and constitutional means. Recognizing that the rights of women war veterans and women war victims require targeted attention, the WVF created a Standing Committee on Women.

The purposes of the WVF Standing Committee on Women are to identify needs and recommend appropriate methods of action to meet them regarding the problems that women have to face due to their participation or their involvement in armed conflicts and the consequences affecting women on account of armed conflicts (including legal, economic and social status). It is these concerns that the WVF wishes to bring to the attention of the Commission as it considers the theme of equality.

*E/CN.6/1992/1.

Today, unhappily, despite some positive changes in world order that we have seen in the last two years, the numbers of victims of war continue to proliferate as new and old wars, internal conflicts and civil strife plague our planet. It has been estimated that over two thirds of these war victims are women and children. As the Commission reviews the situation of women around the world under the theme of equality, we urge that the large groups of women war victims and war veterans should be included.

Equality of treatment of women war veterans and war victims by national Governments and international agencies is a major interest of the WVF Standing Committee on Women. Through several surveys and anecdotal testimony, we have found that women war victims often experience de jure and de facto discrimination. This is the case for millions of large numbers of refugee women and many war-disabled civilian women. In previous statements, we have set forth our concerns about this situation.

We also call the attention of the Commission to the sizeable groups of women war victims who have suffered discrimination from Governments in the benefits, health care and pensions available to them. Women - spouses and mothers - who have been the carers for the war disabled have not been recognized for their important services and have been denied pensions and health care. Because of this devoted service, the carer is unable to pursue work of her own and often is ineligible for social security. When the disabled veteran dies, the carer is left without any means for survival. Except in a couple of countries, war widows get inadequate pensions and often no health benefits. Furthermore, many women veterans and war victims lack information on the benefits they are eligible for and how to obtain them.

At its Fifth International Conference on Legislation concerning Veterans and War Victims, at Bad Ischl, Austria, in 1988, the WVF gave major consideration to the legal status of women war veterans and war victims. A number of recommendations were made by the Conference including a call to Governments to take action that would:

- (a) Ensure full equality of treatment for women war victims and women war veterans;
- (b) Include ageing women in scientific research on the late effects and associated diseases related to experiencing war;
- (c) Provide information on available benefits and programmes as well as counselling services to all war victims and war veterans, including women;
- (d) Enact measures to provide adequate compensation to improve the living standards of widows, including suitable housing, and better health benefits;
- (e) Call for government recognition of the nursing contributions of the spouses of severely disabled veterans and make provision for income, health benefits and security during their old age.

We hope that these findings of the WVF will be helpful in broadening the scope of the work of the Commission.

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PRIORITY THEMES

DEVELOPMENT: INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT;
WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Statement submitted by the following non-governmental organization in
consultative status with the Economic and Social Council: American
Association of Retired Persons (category II)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is
circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social
Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

1. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) would like to express
its appreciation to the Division for the Advancement of Women for the suc-
cessful and extremely fruitful collaboration in the organization of the
Expert Group Meeting on the Integration of Ageing and Elderly Women in
Development, which took place from 7 to 11 October 1991 in Vienna. The
Expert Group Meeting, the first to focus specifically on older women, was
attended by 11 experts from different regions of the world, and repre-
sentatives of Governments, of the United Nations system and of research
institutes as well as of 21 non-governmental organizations concerned with
the advancement of women and older persons.

2. The AARP applauds the findings and recommendations of the Expert Group
Meeting. In particular, it would like to highlight the following points on
which there was a clear consensus: (a) unless women become aware and are
enabled to take steps at younger ages and throughout their life to provide
for their own economic security, health and participation in society, they
will remain especially vulnerable to poverty, disease and isolation in later
years; (b) although women continue to suffer significant disadvantages and
inequalities throughout their life, particularly in the areas of education,
training, employment and access to adequate nutrition and health care, the
vast majority of older women continue to make significant economic, social,

*E/CN.6/1992/1.

cultural and political contributions to the development of their societies; and (c) due to the lack of adequate data documenting the living conditions of older women and measuring their contributions in economic terms, the work of older women and, indeed, older women themselves remain largely invisible to economists and policy makers.

3. To remedy this situation and help to improve the lives of current and future generations of older women, the Expert Group Meeting adopted by consensus a series of recommendations. Specifically, the AARP strongly recommends that the Commission on the Status of Women should take action now on the recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting. The issues dealt with by the Expert Working Group are summed up below.

4. Benefits from development planning and projects should accrue to women throughout their entire life. Planning targeted at young women should take the longer term perspective of the impact that decisions at younger ages have over the life-course. This longer term perspective should, in particular, take into account the goals of economic security, full participation in society and the reduction of morbidity at older ages. International development agencies, Governments and non-governmental organizations should include women at older ages as equal participants in all development projects.

5. Data on the current and projected situation of older women need to be improved and expanded. Unless more is known of the current living circumstances of older women and more accurate projections are made regarding their levels of education, skills, training, health status and financial resources, it will be difficult to maximize the use of scarce resources by accurately targeting policies and programmes. We welcome the initiative taken by the Division for the Advancement of Women to design a standard profile on the current and projected situation of older women and pledge our continued support to this effort. To make this initiative truly successful, we urge that this approach receive the active support of Governments and the assistance of international donor agencies.

6. We recognize and applaud the considerable work already undertaken by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Statistical Office and the International Labour Organisation, as well as other international and national bodies with regard to evaluating women's work in areas that are usually recognized as economic. The contributions of older women in the home, in the fields, in the family and in the community are most often overlooked or undervalued. We therefore urge the above-mentioned organizations to ensure that the total economic contributions of women, including those of older women, are quantified and included in the System of National Accounts.

7. A particularly intractable problem, even in countries where there is legislation against age discrimination, as is the case in the United States of America, is the issue of de facto discrimination and negative stereotyping based on age. Women are especially vulnerable because age discrimination is often combined with gender discrimination. The AARP therefore urges that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women give particular attention to discrimination based on age when reviewing national reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

8. In conclusion, the AARP reiterates that the above-mentioned recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting represent important milestones in the development of strategies for the advancement of not only older women but also women of all ages. We consequently urge that these important recommendations be incorporated in the planning and implementation of all future activities for the advancement of women, in particular the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (1995).